2:Skinner E-5 (1917) 1920
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Bribri

286 *Weaving.*—Two women's blanket skirts of woven cotton were obtained after considerable search, one of which is shown in pl. XVIII, *b*. As the manufacture of cotton cloth is now said to be a lost art, we must turn again to Gabb[14] for his observations.

"Belts, breech-cloths, cloths for wrapping the bones of the dead, and women's petticoats are woven of cotton. The cotton is raised with
248 no care beyond planting a few seeds and allowing the plants to take care of themselves. They grow to the height of ten or twelve feet and almost every house has a few in its vicinity. The yellow flowers, buds, and open bolls are seen all the year round, together on every tree. The
[462] women collect the ripe cotton, pick it from the seeds with their fingers and spin it. The loom
286 is a simple frame of four sticks; the two upright ones are planted in the ground; the other two rudely tied to these. The warp is wrapped around the two horizontal bars and a simple contrivance of threads is arranged to open and reverse it. The thread for the woof wound on slender sticks is then passed through in the usual manner and driven tight by blows of a smooth stick. The process is exceedingly slow
[462] and tedious and I have never seen it performed except by the men. The belts are usually two or three inches wide and four or five feet long. Breech-cloths are about four feet long and a
292 little more than a foot wide. The cloths for the
286 dead and the women's petticoats are wider and

2:Skinner E-5 (1917) 1920
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Bribri

a trifle longer. Except for the cloths for the dead, which are woven white and afterwards painted, most of this cotton work is ornamented with colors. Besides native vegetable dyes, the people of Bri-bri buy cotton dyed a dirty purple with the blood of the *murex*. This is procured from the people of Terraba on the Pacific. They also now occasionally buy colored threads of foreign production, especially a rich bluish purple, of which they are particularly fond. All of this weaving is with very coarse thread, nearly as thick as the finer twines used by shopkeepers in the United States for tying small packages. The cloth is consequently coarse in texture and rough in appearance, but closely woven and soft to the feel."

Gabb also speaks of a very large blanket of this material, large enough, he says, to cover a good-sized double bed. A plain blanket of this description was seen by the writer on Coen river.

Besides the blankets, a belt of woven cotton (pl. XVIII, *a*) ornamented with parallel bands of blue and red on the natural white ground, was obtained. It is an old specimen, perhaps the only one that remained among the Bribri.

A head-band of closely woven cotton thread (pl. XVIII, *c*) was purchased of

2:Skinner E-5 (1917) 1920
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Bribri

292
532

MASK AND DANCE DRESS COLLECTED BY W. M. GABB
(Courtesy of the U. S. National Museum)

[facing p. 10]

302 (painted) below the eyes and on the cheeks. . . ." [84] In the 20th century, there is no trace [178] of paint in the Caribbean region. On the [177] Pacific side, a few women copy non-Indians by putting *achiote* on their cheeks in place of rouge and using lipstick which they buy. [751] Cocoa butter is applied occasionally as a protection against the sun.

292 In upper Talamanca and upper Chirripó on festive occasions, during short periods of group [477] work in building a house, clearing forests, hauling logs for a clan grave, etc., men still wear [237] headdresses made of white feathers and of macaw and eagle feathers (*see* Reunions).
301 Formerly the *usegLa* (*see* Social Organization) wore necklaces of jaguar teeth. Today, [825] boys use these necklaces "to get them used to hunting and take away fear of the jaguar." Beads made from sea shells are mixed with these teeth (fig. 12, *c*). The long all-shell [178] strings, called *chaquira* and mentioned in Spanish reports,[85] are not known now. Chil- [777] dren have a "good luck" necklace called *sewivu* in Cabécar. This is made from the bark [824] of a tree called *kuri* which is claimed to be immune to disease and to propagate of its own [237] accord. Sea shells, seeds (occasionally carved), bones, and jaguar, monkey, or alligator teeth are strung on it (*see* Manufacture). When financially possible, women wear strands of [439] red beads which are bought in trading posts or commissaries. There are no earrings in the remote sections.

301 On the Pacific side, the "good luck" neck- 184 laces of children have fewer or no teeth and [777] often a Roman Catholic charm or cross is worn. Here women wear earrings and single [439] strands of glass beads bought from traveling merchants.

TRANSPORTATION

481 roots. They are also adept at crossing swift boulder-filled rivers on foot. Their only aid when traveling is a long staff which they cut for this purpose before undertaking a journey.

[84] Fernández, 1883, vol. III, ftn. 10, p. 338.
[85] Fernández, 1882, vol. II, p. 152.

[P. 24(B)] SA19 Talamanca SA19 Bribri Cabecar

381 **Glues.** *See* Musical Instruments and Hunting.

281 **Skins.** There is relatively little use of cattle hide among these people. The Cabécares of the [231] Pacific slope who have most of the cattle, and [415] rarely the Bribri and Cabécares of Talamanca, make pouches or hunting bags from the sacs of bulls. The Pacific Cabécares also copy their non-indigenous neighbors in using skins to dry rice, beans, and cacao. Both wild pig and jaguar hide are made into pouches. Pieces of [824] deer hide are used for minute bags which [777] contain good luck seeds to put on children's necklaces. In upper Talamanca men (chiefly [292] medicine men) wear deer and jaguar skins over their clothing on festive occasions. Peccary [534] hide is used to cover drums on the Pacific slope and iguana skin is used on the Caribbean side.

314 **Rubber.** On the Caribbean slope, rubber is 824 tapped from the wild tree (*Castilla fallax* O. F. Cook) by the Cabécares and made into pouches (*see* Hunting).

322 **Wood and Stone.** Wood, of course, has a variety of uses many of which have been mentioned earlier. Among the Bribri of the [252] Caribbean littoral, grinding tables are often made of wood and are large enough for several women to use at the same time. They are located beside a water hole or stream and are balanced on logs. On the Caribbean side, [415] mahogany or cedar mixing trays or troughs, [273] up to twelve feet in length and supported by four feet, are used for chicha mash (*see* Furnishings). Vertical wooden mortars for rice, [412] shallow mortars, and large trays or bowls are [415] common. These last two items are used for [251] drying foodstuffs or even for mixing paste [252] with water. Wooden staffs known as *cacique* sticks are an important part of the medicine man's equipment (*see* Special Paraphernalia and Significance).

372 In upper Talamanca, the fire stick is used (*see* Fire-making).

324 Stone is not worked today but is employed 287 for food preparation and the manufacture of bark cloth.

643 defects. The following is an eye-witness account of the young ruler at the beginning of this century:

> . . . from the first moment, I saw that that man was more than mediocre. . . A man born to govern; who was law to his people, and who bore on his face the mark of sadness but not of depression. His countenance is that of a person who commands. . . . What a fine man! I thought, and yet, Antonio, king of the Talamancas, has in all Costa Rica the poor reputation of irrational idolatry and uncontrollable passions! [4]

His dress was always plain, like a mestizo, and could have been confused with that of any Indian if he had not been accustomed as a chieftain to wear a necklace with six gold eagles, a feathered headdress, and carry the staff which is associated with power. When he went to the capital, he changed his costume and wore an impeccable black suit, cotton shirt and boots, which must have bothered him considerably as he was used to going barefooted.

[301 292 293]

There is little information about his youth which seemed to have lacked the preparation for what his destiny decreed as it was not until 1874, when his uncle Willie assumed the power, that there was even a suspicion that he might be a possible successor. The scarce data available recounts that his mother was drowned in the Lari River and that in his youth, Antonio traveled to distant places such as Guatemala and Panama.[5]

643 797 648

The naming of Antonio as King practically coincided with the arrival of Bernardo Augusto Thiel, newly appointed Bishop to Costa Rica, who became the number one defender of the Indians. It was on the 4th of July, 1881, during a visit to Boruca and Talamanca, that the Bishop first met King Antonio and Mr. Lyon. This opened a new era for the Talamancans as the churchman, according to one description, ". . . had the character of the Vázqueses de Coronado and the faith of the Antonio Margrils." [6]

Shortly afterwards, a letter of Antonio directed to the government of Costa Rica asking for aid gives evidence of his interest

[4] Segarra y Julia, 1907, p. 571.
[5] Tristán, 1922, p. 156.
[6] Fernández Guardia, 1918, p. 162.

643 funeral feast. It is said that his death was due to having mistakenly drunk tincture of iodine. What is probably the truth is that he was poisoned because of personal hatreds. Kohkemper[11] recounts the version which seems most acceptable. He states that Antonio fell out with an Indian woman and she poisoned him and afterwards met the same fate.

José, the nephew, died a few days later. It is not known whether his death was due to natural or violent causes. With his passing, the kingship of Talamanca remained vacant.

[292] [301] Some years after this, the French traveler Périgny, found the insignias of royalty well preserved. These included a headdress of eagle

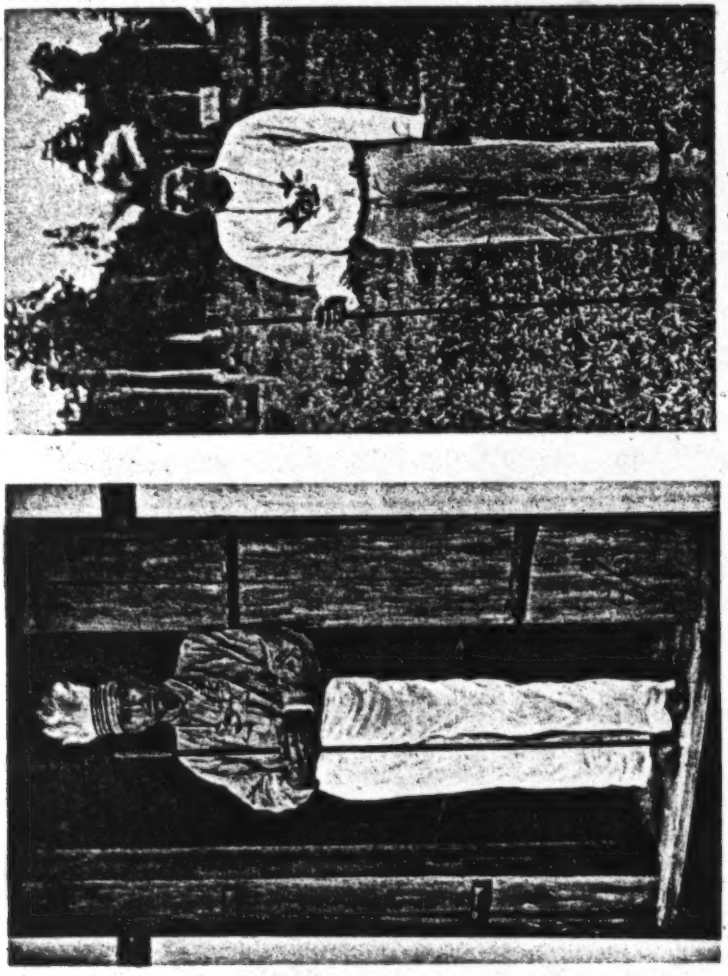
[11] Kohkemper, 1954, p. 60.

643 292 feathers and the necklace with six large golden eagles, the remaining testimony of the last monarch in Costa Rica.

[301] In 1957, a group of Bribri Indians from Talamanca brought a headdress of eagle plumes, fashioned in the same manner as the one used by King Antonio, to the National Museum of Costa Rica. They asked that it be placed near the portrait in oil, dating from 1892, of the deceased ruler (fig. 14). This hangs in one of the halls of the museum and shows [301] King Antonio Saldaña with his royal jewels. This gesture is evidence that the memory of the last king has not been forgotten and that in spite of his debilities he remains important in the traditions of his people.

6: Stone E-5 (1956-1959) 1962 SA19 Talamanca SA19

142
291
301
643
292



a, Oil painting of Antonio Saldaña, last King of Talamanca (courtesy of the National Museum of Costa Rica).
b, Photograph of Antonio Saldaña (*from* Fernández Guardia, 1911).

[END PLATE 13]